

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 01406 071003Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8258
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 1406

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BG
SUBJ: AWAMI LEAGUE RECONCILES DIFFERENCES

REF: DACCA 1077

1. THE VARIOUS FACTIONS OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE WERE
ABLE TO MAKE SUFFICIENT COMPROMISES DURING THE PARTY'S
COUNCIL SESSION MARCH 3-5 TO KEEP THE PARTY INTACT,
AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT. AFTER SEVERAL STORMY INITIAL
SESSIONS AT WHICH PARTY WORKERS PARADED AROUND THE HALL
AND SHOUTED SLOGANS, SENIOR LEADERS WENT INTO PRIVATE
SESSION AND REACHED AGREEMENT ON NEW PARTY OFFICE
HOLDERS. ABDUL MALEK UKIL, A FORMER SPEAKER OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN THE EARLY DAYS OF BANGLADESH, WAS
NAMED PRESIDENT AND ABDUR RAZZAK, THE YOUTHFUL AND
SOMETIMES INTEMPERATE ORGANIZER RELEASED RECENTLY
FROM JAIL, WAS MADE GENERAL SECRETARY IN A COMPROMISE
WITH THE BAKSAL FACTION LED BY BEGUM ZOHRA TAJUDDIN, WHO
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 DACCA 01406 071003Z

HERSELF WAS NAMED THE SENIOR OF SIX PARTY VICE PRESIDENTS.
OTHER VPS INCLUDE MATIUR RAHMAN, RAFIQUDDIN BHUIYAN, ABDUL
MANNAN, MOHIUDDIN AHMED AND ABDUL MOMEN TALUKDAR.

2. BEGUM TAJUDDIN, WHO HAD ORGANIZED SEPARATE SLATES
OF PARTY COUNCILLORS IN MANY DISTRICTS, ACTIVELY ASSERTED
HER INFLUENCE IN THE NAMING OF OFFICE-HOLDERS AND THE

FORMULATION OF PARTY PHILOSOPHY, BUT SHE MADE NO SERIOUS EFFORT TO DISRUPT THE PROCEEDINGS. IN ADDITION TO KEY POSITIONS IN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, HER FACTION REPORTEDLY PERSUADED THE MODERATES TO ACCEPT THE LEGACY OF SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN AS THE FATHER OF THE PARTY. BUT AS ONE OF THE PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MODERATE FACTION TOLD POLOFF, THE PARTY WILL MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO RETURN IN SPIRIT TO THE PRE-BAKSAL DAYS WHEN THE PARTY STOOD FOR NATIONALISM AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. FOR THE MOMENT, ONE OF THE AL'S ORIGINAL AND MOST CONTROVERSIAL FOUR PILLARS, SOCIALISM, HAS BEEN WATERED DOWN TO "SOCIAL JUSTICE".

3. MISSING FROM THE PARTY HIERARCHY IS MIZANUR RAHMAN CHOUDHURY, ONE OF THE LEADERS OF THE MODERATES. APPARENTLY IN A UNITY EFFORT, THE LESS CONTROVERSIAL UKIL WAS PROPOSED BY THE MODERATES AS PRESIDENT, AND THE DISGRUNTLED CHOUDHURY REFUSED TO HAVE HIS NAME CONSIDERED FOR ANY OTHER POST.

4. NOW THAT THE PARTY LEADERS, IN A SURPRISING DEMONSTRATION OF RESTRAINT AND POLITICAL HORSE TRADING, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO RECONCILE THE PARTY, HOWEVER TEMPORARILY, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO AGREE UPON A SPECIFIC PARTY PLATFORM. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE PARTY WILL TRY TO STRESS COOPERATIVE EFFORTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, USING FOOD FOR WORK SCHEMES AS ONE MODEL. IF THE MODERATES CAN

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PAGE 03 DACCA 01406 071003Z

CONTINUE TO PREVAIL, THE PARTY WILL TRY TO PRESENT A SOBER AND RATIONAL CHALLENGE TO PRESIDENT ZIA ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL MATTERS AND ESCHEW AGITATION OR DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH MIGHT ALARM THE PUBLIC.

5. ONE PARTY ELEMENT WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR RECONCILED TO THE SPIRIT OF UNITY AND SOBRIETY IS THE CHATTRA LEAGUE, THE STUDENT FRONT, WHOSE RANKS WERE EFFECTIVELY PENETRATED AND INFLUENCED BY BEGUM TAJUDDIN'S SUPPORTERS. EVEN BEFORE THE RECENT STUDENT CONFERENCE ENDED IN DISARRAY (REFTEL, THERE HAD BEEN CHATTRA LEAGUE PLANS TO USE THE OCCASION OF MARCH 7, THE ANNIVERSARY OF A FIERY MUJIB SPEECH IN 1971, TO LEAD A STUDENT PROCESSION TO MUJIB'S RESIDENCE. WHETHER THE PARENT PARTY CAN MODIFY THE STUDENT FRONT'S PLANS FOR MARCH 7 MAY DETERMINE HOW EFFECTIVE THE NEW AWAMI LEAGUE WILL BE, AS IT IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE CHATTRA LEAGUE IS STILL ACTING, AT LEAST PARTLY, AT BEGUM TAJUDDIN'S BEHEST. DACCA MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES HAVE PREPARED TODAY FOR TROUBLE. ADDITIONAL POLICE UNITS ARE STANDING BY THE UNIVERSITY, WHICH IS CLOSED, AND DOZENS OF POLICEMAN ARE POSTED AT THE SHEIKH'S RESIDENCE.

6. PROVIDED THE AWAMI LEAGUE CAN MAINTAIN ITS UNITY, IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO PRESENT A FORMIDABLE CHALLENGE TO JAGODAL, THE PARTY ORGANIZED ON ZIA'S BEHALF. AS AWAMI LEAGUE MEMBERS ADMIT, HOWEVER, IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO LIVE DOWN THE PARTY'S PAST AND TO DEVELOP POSITIVE PROGRAMS FOR THE FUTURE.
BERGESEN

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